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RESURRECTION:
THE HISTORY AND RECONSTITUTION
OF THE EURASIAN IDEA

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BY
MATTHEW JACOB SCHMIDT

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...the progressive collapse, first of the German state and then of the German idea itself took its course....Germany was not merely wholly defeated in 1919; it ceased to exist as a coherent nation, waiting in a state of rancor to be told what it was supposed to be doing.

--Nicholas Fraser, describing the final days of WWI.
Harper's, April 2002.

Like Germany in the decade after Versailles, the 1990s for Russia have seen not only the implosion of the Soviet State and its sustaining idea, but also the failure of the original democratic impulse that gave birth to Yeltsin's federation as well as the subsequent dissolution, if not outright collapse, of the democratic-federative idea at its core. With the economic collapse in 1998 and the ascension to power of Vladimir Putin in 1999, Russian political elites were desperately searching for an alternative political philosophy to what they saw as an increasingly corrupt and emasculating situation. In the words of one commentator, many in Russia saw Putin's official election in 2000 as marking, "... a clear watershed dividing the different historical epochs. In their search for an ideological framework for the future, many in Russia are looking to the past."¹

To end what many saw as a decade of humiliation at the hands of the "West", a new idea of national self-determination (*samo-stoiatel'nost'*) was required – one that would be able to reconstitute an otherwise atrophied pride of belonging, provide an organizing principle for both domestic and foreign policy, and provide a rallying point for a broad cross-section of groups living across the territory of the former Soviet Union. What has emerged is the philosophy of a "Eurasian" cultural, spiritual, and political identity that ostensibly transcends any specific national appellation,

¹ Igor Turbakov, *Russia in Search of a New Paradigm: Eurasianism Revisited* [journal on-line] (New York: 2000, accessed 24 March 2002); available from www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav032400; Internet.

but which could easily provide a philosophical argument around which a reinvigorated Russian nationalist movement might rally.

This neo-Eurasianist movement is led today by Aleksandr Gel'evich Dugin, a man whose political influence is reflected in his role as the chief adviser to the speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament (Duma), and as a frequently cited expert on geopolitics within the Russian military establishment. Dugin is also a prolific writer on a range of other interests including religion and history.² He is widely-known as a kind of public political philosopher, although his writings extend far beyond the narrowly political. The Eurasianist ideas he professes include a deep respect for Nazi geopolitical theory, yet Dugin and his supporters represent an increasingly wide group of political leaders, social critics, and academics within Russia who view his resurrected Eurasianism as the ideological center around which to rebuild a resurgent Russian state that would effectively reunite most of the old Soviet Union under its ideological premise, or even physically reincorporate it into a Eurasian empire. The potential of the Eurasianist idea to impact current Russian political philosophy to this extent speaks to the importance of understanding the history of Eurasianism, and how that history has allowed the idea to potentially become a unifying ideology for Russian politics.

The foundations for the idea of a specifically Eurasian cultural space have deep roots in Russian intellectual history. This paper will explore these roots both as a political philosophy and as a geographical and cultural construction. In doing so it seeks to use the history of the Eurasian idea as a touchstone upon which to evaluate the contemporary Eurasianist ideology being formulated and promoted by Dugin as the answer to the question, 'What is the purpose of the Russian state after the Communist era, and what should it be doing?'

The scope of this endeavor is extremely broad. It cuts across a wide swath of disciplinary fields. In short it deals with things that fall under the general rubric "Russian Idea", and as the

² "Liderii Dvisheniia," [short biography on-line]; (Moscow: Opud Evraziia, accessed 7 March 2002); available from <http://www.eurasia.com.ru/leaders/dugin.html>; Internet.

caveat suggests, this endeavor is fraught with all the twists and knots any discourse on such a broad question always faces. In exploring the development of the Eurasian idea one runs into the classic problem of reading what appears at first to be a term of simple geography, a descriptor of a real and corporeal place, only to find that the term is in fact not just a descriptor of place, but a type of shorthand for a whole pantheon of social, political, and religious values. Like other such place names, the term “Eurasian” is used to identify a type of mindset or a system of values that is characteristic of some defined geographic region. However, in exploring the geographical limitations of this mindset it quickly becomes apparent that the way in which the border itself was drawn and redrawn over time is deeply instructive as to the meaning of the value system connected with it. Moreover, the appellation Eurasia cloaks beneath it centuries of heated debate over what social and spiritual values are supposedly shared within the defined geographic space of the term. This paper seeks to unravel a few specific strands of this hidden patch cloth of meaning, mindful that many other strands, if not whole patches, will nonetheless remain tangled.³

Drawing the Geography of Eurasia

The idea of a distinct Eurasian geography is more or less taken for granted today. Numerous political groups, academic institutions, and journals adorn themselves with some form of a Eurasian title. But like all such definitions, the definition of what constitutes Eurasia and where it might be located was the product of an extended and unconcluded argument. It was a constructed idea that required a complex structure of arguments to support its assertions, and only after centuries of refinement and promulgation did it come to be considered accepted “fact.”

³ For an overview of a similar process see Timothy Garton Ash, “The Puzzle of Central Europe,” *The New York Review*, 18 March 1999. Longer works exploring this question are Czeslaw Milosz, “Central European Attitudes,” in *In Search of Central Europe*, ed. George Schopflin and Nancy Wood (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1989) and Jan Patocka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, trans. Erazim Kohak, ed., James Dodd (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1996).

It was the Russian geographer Vasilii Tatishchev (1686-1750) who first sought to redefine the existing boundaries of Europe and Asia. Tatishchev had attended the Moscow engineering and artillery school, and later took part in the great Northern War against Charles XII of Sweden that Peter I (1672-1725) fought from 1700-1721.⁴ It was the gain of this territory during the war, and the subsequent construction of the city of St. Petersburg, which spurred Peter to have a new geography written which would fit the newly won territory into a geographical outline that moved Russia's place on European maps of the day from the Asian continent unto the European. This redrawing of maps was perhaps the most radical example of Peter's policy of Europeanizing, at least superficially, Russian society. If he was ever going to rebuff the dominant European image of Russia as a barbarian backwater, it was essential that he "draw" Russia into the European fold. By redrawing the eastern boundary of Europe to include Russia, Peter could strengthen the position of his empire in the minds of the established European monarchs while adding historical justification for his internal policy of Europeanization. Any attempt to redefine Russia's political identity required that its basic geographic identity be changed first.⁵

In order to write the geography Peter wanted, Tatishchev had to first discard the method established since antiquity of using rivers and bodies of water as the standard for defining continental boundaries. The reigning geographical definition of Europe as being bounded in the

⁴ Mark Bassin, "Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space," *Slavic Review* 50, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 5.

On April 29, 2001 Russia celebrated the 315th anniversary of Tatishchev's birth. Despite his importance as a geographer Tatishchev's most famous work was his "Russian History Dating Back to the Most Ancient Times". He also is considered the first Russian historiographer, and spent much of his time studying the development human society and the underpinnings of state power. He is also considered the father of the Russian encyclopedic dictionary. After the war Tatishchev was given an administrative position in his beloved Urals, where he founded the city of Yekaterinburg. "Russia Marks Tatishchev's 315-th Birth Anniversary," *Pravda*, 4 April 2001, [journal online] (Moscow: 2001, accessed 28 March, 2002); available at <http://english.pravda.ru/culture/2001/04/29/4444.html>; Internet, and Apollon Kuz'min, *Tatishchev*, (Moscow: Molodaiia Gvardiia, 1987).

⁵ In much the same way, the importance of geographical definitions in relation to cultural identity is apparent in present-day Ukrainian independence from the Soviet Union, which was in part the result of a belief that Ukraine's cultural identity required that it secede from a physical union with Moscow in order to pursue a closer political-geographic one with Europe.

south by the Mediterranean Sea, in the west by the Atlantic, in the north by the Baltic Sea, and extending eastward to the bank of the Don (Tanais) river was an artifact of ancient Greek geography. This map of Europe was rooted in a picture of the world as divided into three separate massifs – Europe, Asia, and Africa (See Figure 1) which were defined by the major water ways, rivers, oceans, or seas, surrounding them.

Russian geographical writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries basically repeated earlier western works which divided the world according to Classical divisions. These works identified the Don as the boundary between the two continents without further elaboration, and any inconsistency with the known reality of the river's size and course, was simply ignored. It was thought that the Don was a much larger river than in reality, and the Sea of Azov as drawn on maps was stretched so far north as to make the area of land between it and the Arctic coast (which was itself not a known fact to the ancient cartographers) little more than an isthmus.) Thus the area separating the European massif from the Asia on maps of the day wildly distorted the true nature of the area.

Long after western scholars had begun questioning the veracity of Classical geography, Russian texts were still repeating this error. Mark Bassin suggests that the reason this state of knowledge persisted as long as it did despite its obvious errors was because it was treated as an issue of scholastics rather than geography or topography. Classical knowledge was revered without regard to its correctness, and the question of the Europe-Asia boundary was simply too obscure to merit much attention before the Petrine reforms pushed it to the fore.⁶

So in place of this standard, Tatishchev proposed a strikingly different one – the *velikiy poias* – or great belt – as the defining “natural configuration” along which to delineate the continents, and by the eighteenth century Russian diplomats were already deeply engaged in promoting the idea of Russia as European empire. Yet despite the tenacious promotion of Tatishchev's new geography by

⁶ Bassin, “Russia between Europe and Asia,” 4-5.

the Russian court, Russia's place as a European power was accepted doubtfully, if at all, by contemporary European monarchs. Indeed, Catherine the Great (1762-1796) who had felt compelled to outright proclaim in 1766 that "Russia is a European power" later wrote to the Prussian ruler Frederick the Great that her boastfulness had perhaps been a bit pretentious, like a raven donning a peacock's plumage for effect.⁷

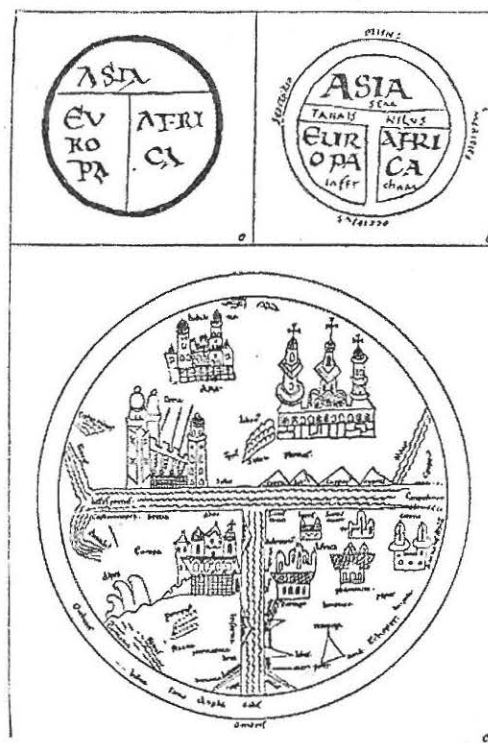


Figure 1: Schema of a "T in O" map from the late classical period depicting the geographic worldview that was accepted in Russia well into the sixteenth century. Note the prominence of the Tanais (Don) river as it, along with the Nilus (Nile), neatly divide the known world into three "world islands".
(Source: Professor Kathleen Coyne Kelly of Northeastern University, [map on-line] available at <http://www.dac.neu.edu/english/kakelly/med/beyond.html#anchor47158>)

The concept of Europe as handed down from antiquity to the people on both sides of the Don river was strictly a geographical concept. It assigned no cultural or political characteristics to the

⁷ Bassin, "Russia between Europe and Asia", 12.

continents. Yet by the time of Peter's reign the definition of Europe as a narrow geographical concept had long since begun to be conflated and identified with a broad range of other cultural traits, which were gradually wearing down the primacy of geography in the definition of what it meant to be European. So that just as that same geography was finally being challenged, it was becoming less and less central to the European concept. In place of the strict geographical Europe, there arose the idea of a culturally superior Europe.

This transformation had its roots in the Middle Ages, when Christianity began to back away from its policy universal expansion, and began instead to cultivate the idea of the Church as the defender of a special Christian European realm. The transformation to an exclusivist doctrine gradually over centuries became a rigid belief in the moral, spiritual, and political superiority of European culture. European culture was understood to be the pinnacle of human civilization, and even though in area Europe was by far the smallest of the continents, it was widely believed as Samuel Purchas wrote that, "the Qualitie of Europe exceeds her Quantitie, in this the least, in that the best of the world."⁸

As this thesis of European exceptionalism evolved into a theory of European cultural superiority it became increasingly important for the Russian state to be seen as a member of Europe, or else it would risk being written out of the mythology of European civilization altogether. Indeed, it was Peter's own belief in European superiority that drove his radical vision of reform. And it only followed that if Europe was the preeminent civilization and the embodiment of the highest forms of human culture, it was imperative that Russia be considered a part of this tradition; especially if it Russia wanted to be afforded the full respect of the established European monarchies in political affairs. Thus Peter sought parity with Europe on *Europe's* terms. He fought to build a navy and extend his realm to the Baltic and the Black Seas, changed his own title from the odd-sounding (to

⁸ Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, Haklyut Society, Extra Series, 20 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1905), 1:248, quoted in Bassin, "Russia between Europe and Asia", 3.

European ears) “tsar” to the more regally European title of “Emperor”, and moved the capital from the decidedly non-European city of Moscow to the new city of St. Petersburg, which he would build from the swamp up to become his “Window on Europe.”

All of the Petrine reforms were aimed at remaking the Russian empire in the image of the contemporary European empires he admired, and Tatishchev’s choice of the Urals as a demarcation line proved beneficial to this enterprise in yet another way. Tatishchev’s marker meant that just like the burgeoning empires of Great Britain, France, and Spain, the Russian empire would be multi-continental too. Although whereas the empires of Western Europe were naval ones, tied together by strong military and merchant navies, the Russian empire was unique in that it would be the largest land empire on earth. But like the European empires which consisted of a home “metropolis” which in turn controlled exotic, non-European colonies, Russia too would have her own exotica in the form of Asian colonies in Siberia.⁹ In fact, the image of Siberia in Russian literature, as well as in world literature, draws heavily upon its initial association with the orient, the alien, the dangerous, and the forlorn, giving it a place in the pantheon of Russian literature roughly similar to that of India and Africa in British literature of the colonial period.¹⁰ The new geographical image of Russia also spawned a linguistic counterpart, as the language soon began differentiating between the terms *russskii*, meaning an ethnic Russian, and *rossiiskii*, which referred to a citizen of the Russian empire who was not considered to be of ethnic Russian origin.¹¹

In Tatishchev’s mind the Urals marked the division between two completely distinct parts.¹² By the late 1700s this view of Russia was widely accepted as an accurate description of both its geographical, cultural and ethnic characteristics. To some, the Asia-Europe boundary was still

⁹ Bassin, “Russia between Europe and Asia”, 5.

¹⁰ For examples of the Siberian image in literature see Valentin Rasputin, *Siberia, Siberia*, trans. Margaret Winchell and Gerald Mikkelsen, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996).

¹¹ S.G. Pushkarev, *Dictionary of Russian Historical Terms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 31.

¹² At the southern tip of the Urals Tatishchev drew his boundary along the Ural river to the Caspian Sea, then southwest following the contours of the Caucasus to the Sea of Azov and into the Black Sea, Tatishchev, *Leksikon rossiiskoi*, 266, 271; cited in Bassin, “Russia between Europe and Asia”, 5.

farther east along the Ob or Enisei rivers – which represented a return to using the ancient standard of rivers for drawing geographic boundaries – but the basic division and its meaning was clear: to the east of the Urals was Asia proper and the colonies of *European* Russia, to the west was Europe proper and the newborn empire of the great *European* monarch Peter I.

Writing the Philosophy of Eurasia

The dawning of the 19th century brought a great and vast challenge to the *ancien régime* of the European empires which Peter and his successors had tried to emulate through their reforms of the Russian empire. The British Empire's colonies in North America had staged a revolution and won. France would soon follow suit, and throughout the empires of Europe a growing middle class was beginning to chafe under the bridle of aristocratic rule.

In 1829, just a year before the July 1830 revolution in France, Pyotr Chaadaev's (1793-1856) first "Philosophical Letters" was published. In the "Letters" he lamented the Great Schism in Christianity which had resulted in Russia being cut off from Europe and the Renaissance (during which the gradual shift toward a concept of European cultural superiority had begun) and which had left her "neither to the West nor to the East."¹³ To redress this, Chaadaev called for a reunification between the split Creeds which would build on Peter's reforms and finally, fully unite Russia with Europe philosophically and religiously. But Chaadaev was also a great admirer of the European aristocracy, and with the French Revolution apparently sounding the aristocracy's death knell, he soon turned toward a vision of Russia not as the lost step child of Europe yearning to find its way home, but as the returning savoir that would rescue the faltering European *ancien régime* and with it its basic Christian principles, from the ruin of revolution.

¹³ Pyotr Ia. Chaadaev, *The Major Works of Peter Chaadaev: A Translation and Commentary*, comp. Raymond T. McNally (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1969): 23-51, quoted in Peter J.S. Duncan, *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Revolution, Communism and After*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 19-21.

In comparison to the older British and French empires, the Russian empire had arisen late. But in Chaadaev's mind the youthfulness of the empire only meant that it was especially well suited for its new mission of answering the questions of social justice which were now threatening the core of the *régime*. In his "Apologia of a Madman" – the title was chosen because Nicholas I (1825-1855) had declared him insane and exiled him to an asylum for his earlier writings because their tone of support for the status quo threatened to inflame anti-monarchist sentiment of the kind that had precipitated the Decembrist revolt of 1825. This, and his call for a return to Papal allegiance, had managed to offend both the revolutionaries and the government. He wrote:

I think that if we have come after others, it is in order to do better than the others. . . I have the inner conviction that we are called upon to resolve most of the problems in the social order, to accomplish most of the ideas which arose in the old societies, to make a pronouncement about those very grave questions which occupy humanity¹⁴

His later "Apologia" notwithstanding, Chaadaev's original "letters" had in part provoked the many and varied responses of the Slavophil writers. Most of these responses took the form of a renunciation of Chaadaev's original admiration for European society, which was now no longer understood to be the apogee of human civilization and worthy, if not demanding, of emulation.¹⁵ Instead, many of the leading voices in Russia called for the nation to turn its energy towards creating a polity that would stand as an exemplar to the entire world in its unity, justice, and strength *against* the decaying European order.

Chief among the critics of European society and of those within Russia who wanted a closer alignment with Europe, was Nikolai Ia. Danilevskii (1822-1885). In 1869 sections of his *Rossiiia i Evropa* (*Russia and Europe*) first appeared in a series of installments in the journal *Zaria* (*Dawn*).

¹⁴ Chaadaev, *The Major Works*, 213-14.

¹⁵ On the concept of the "intelligentsia" see Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, (New York: Viking, 1978), and *The Russian Intelligentsia*, ed. Richard Pipes, (New York: 1961).

In it Danilevskii broke with the pro-Western school of the intelligentsia and declared that Russia's destiny lay in asserting the uniqueness of Russian culture not as part of the European tradition, but in direct opposition to it.

But before arguing for the distinct nature of Slavic (and by inclusion, Russian) culture, the reigning geographical notion of Europe – the definition of Tatishchev that had been aggressively promoted for over a century by the Russian court – had to be revised yet again. What Danilevskii did completely upended it. He maintained that not only was Russia not in fact a part of Europe, but rather that Europe as a continent did not exist! Europe was not its own continent, he argued, but by any reasonable standard of geography it was clearly just a tiny appendage of Asia! By this reasoning, if Europe as a geographic entity no longer existed then the whole idea that European culture represented the highest achievement of mankind was also gravely undermined. The very concept of any sort of cultural uniqueness having been predicated upon the idea of an underlying physical distinction, with this argument Danilevskii brought to bear a very powerful attack on the prevailing European claim of cultural superiority.

The basis of this attack was a denial of Tatishchev's demarcation standard, the *velikii poias*. Danilevskii argued that Tatishchev's *velikii poias* was a weak standard to use in demarcating the Europe-Asia continental boundary. The Urals were not much of a barrier, he maintained, because not only did they leave a significant gap at their southern tip, but they were easily passable in comparison to the Alps, the Caucasus, or the Indian Himalayas. In proposing that the Urals were hardly a continental divide when compared to these Danilevskii, himself a botanist, ichthyologist and geographer, was drawing on the newly developing theory of plate tectonics which had been proposed some years earlier by Alexander von Humboldt and others.¹⁶

Danilevskii's addition to the Europe-Asia debate was the added notion that the two halves demarcated by Tatishchev actually formed a unified "natural-geographic" whole, as indicated by a

¹⁶ Bassin, "Russia between Europe and Asia", 9.

similarity of vegetation, topography, and land-form shape. Interestingly, Danilevskii spends little time on the technicalities of these claims, however, presenting them in a tone of mocking obviousness, using the example of a tourist who arrives in the Urals city of Ekaterinburg only to query his local guide “and just where are these mountains?”¹⁷

Yet when he has finished, what remains is a vast unbroken landmass defined at its edges by the high mountain ranges of the Himalayas, Caucasus, and Alps and the large bodies of water that made up the Arctic, Pacific, and Atlantic oceans, and the Black, Mediterranean, and Caspian Seas. The gigantic, rolling, low steppe in the center of this outline is the Eurasian plain which Bassin characterizes as “an independent geographical world, self-contained and distinct from Europe as well as from Asia.”¹⁸ Danilevskii’s argument would prove lasting. It is essentially this definition of a “central plain of Europe and Asia” that is meant by the term “Eurasia” as it is used today.¹⁹

Danilevskii’s intent in creating this new image of a separate Eurasian space was to disconnect Russia, and indeed all of the lands within this Eurasian cradle, from the spatial definition of Europe and ultimately from European historiography as well. If the Urals were not a marker between European Russia and her Asian colonies to the east, then what kind of a European empire was she? Danilevskii saw Russian expansion east of the Urals as a type of manifest destiny, and explicitly countered the idea that what was really happening was colonization along the lines of the European “salt water doctrine”. Indeed, this was the key reason he had dismantled the notion of a continental divide at the Urals, without which Russia could not fit into the theoretical framework of the European colonial model.

The “salt water doctrine” held that colonial empires were the domain of sea-powers projecting control over water onto distant and alien lands, whereas expansion into contiguous land

¹⁷ N. Ia. Danilevskii, *Rossii i Evropa*, (Moscow: Moskva Kniga, 1991), 24-26, 256.

¹⁸ Bassin, “Russian between Europe and Asia”, 11.

¹⁹ *The Oxford English Dictionary* attributes the first usage in a dictionary to 1868, under an entry “Eurasian-plain, the great central plain of Europe and Asia.” Interestingly, the term “Eurasian” has a completely British usage meaning, “of mixed European and Asiatic (*esp.* Indian) parentage.” Already by 1844 the term is being used to replace the earlier “East Indian” which had the meaning of being from mixed European and Indian (colonial) descent.

was not considered to be a colonial act.²⁰ Russian expansion eastward was not a form of “conquest” (*zavoevaniia*) like British settlement in India, but rather a “free settlement” (*putem svobodnogo passeleniia*) in accord with the historical destiny of the nation.²¹ In short order Danilevskii had leveled the basic geographic assumption underlying the concept of European superiority and with it the rationale of the Petrine policy of creating a Russian colonial empire, and imperial navy in the European image.

With a distinct Eurasian geography now developed, and the weak pretenses of Tatishchev’s geography exposed, Danilevskii moved to strengthen his argument by positing an equally distinct Slavic “cultural-historical” society (*kul’turno-istoricheskii tip*) inhabiting his new geographic realm.²² In the book-length version of *Rossiia i Evropa*, which would be published two years later, Danilevskii asked, “Is Russia a part of Europe? . . . for better or worse – no, it is not . . . [and] Neither honest modesty, nor honest pride can allow Russia to consider herself European.”²³

His answer was that Russia should not, and could not, be a member of the European tradition because its “cultural-historical” type was characterized by greed, excessive individualism, and above all, violence.²⁴ Danilevskii believed that all civilizations underwent an inevitable process of growth and decay. Accordingly he believed this process was an inimitable universal law, in the tradition of Hegelian and Marxist thought, and accordingly “Germano-Roman” Europe had reached its apex as a civilization by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was now in decline.²⁵ The current epoch

²⁰ R. Strausz-Hupe and H. W. Hazard, “The Idea of Colonialism”, (Foreign Policy Research, University of Pennsylvania: 1958), 7. See also Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study of Its Origins and Background*, (New York: The MacMillan Company), 1961. One modern example of how a country uses the “salt water doctrine” to deflect accusations of colonialism is China. It consistently basis its claims to Tibet on the grounds that Tibet is a contiguous, and thus natural, part of China. See [paper on-line] available at www.tibet.com/Humanrights/Unpo/chap2.html.

²¹ Danilevskii, *Rossiia i Evropa*, 24.

²² Danilevskii, *Rossiia i Evropa*, 469-472.

²³ Danilevskii, *Rossiia i Evropa*, 59-61.

²⁴ Danilevskii, *Rossiia i Evropa*, 23-54; 71-91.

²⁵ The full title of Danilevskii’s original works is *Rossiia i Evropa, Vzglad na kul’turnye i politicheskie otnosheniia Slovianskogo mira k Germano-Romanskomu*, transliterated as *Russia and Europe, A Look at the Cultural and Political Relationship of the Slavic World to the Germano-Roman*. It is worth noting that Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* was published in 1848, and that by the time of Danilevskii’s writing at least the German reading portion of the Russian intelligentsia was familiar with Marx’s theories.

in which he was writing would witness the rise of the Slavic “cultural-historical type” (civilization). In his mind it was the realization of this fact that drove a jealous Europe to aggression against the Slavs.

Furthermore, the European cultural-historical type was defined by certain weaknesses not characteristic of the Slavic cultural-historical type; namely, a penchant for domination and violence (a by-product of its Roman heritage), and capitalist greed. Danilevskii saw in the European colonial heritage and the spread of Western Christianity a history of domination, violence, and greed which he attributed to inherent flaws in European society that Slavic culture did not share. The Slavs, and among them chiefly the Russians, were characterized by their unity, peacefulness, and justice. As evidence, he pointed to their peaceful acceptance of Christianity, their unity under a holy dynasty, their supposedly non-dominating, non-colonial, settling of the vast Eurasian continent, and their recent emancipation of the serfs and subsequent land reforms.²⁶

Danilevskii also proposed a clash of civilizations that echoes the now infamous thesis of Samuel Huntington. He believed that an inevitable struggle between the two cultural-historical types would erupt over the fate of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire; that the future of mankind itself would hinge on this battle, and that Russia and Slavdom would be victorious and usher in an era of peace and harmony.²⁷

In order to prepare itself for this task, Danilevskii called the Russian nation to rid itself of all corrupting European influences within its society and take its place at the vanguard of a Slavic union stretching across the Eurasian plain which would then act as an antidote to a diseased European society by virtue of its righteous example.²⁸

²⁶ Hans Kohn, *The Mind of Modern Russia, Historical and Political Thought of Russia's Great Age* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Harper and Row, 1955), 191-193. Danilevskii, *Rossiia i Evropa*, 469-509.

²⁷ Danilevskii, *Rossiia i Evropa*, 460-468.

²⁸ He went so far as to title a chapter of *Rossiia i Evropa* “Evropainichan’ye – bolezin’ russkoi zhizni” (“Europeanism – an illness in Russian life”), 263.

Russia, being foreign to the European world by virtue of its [Russia's] inner workings, and furthermore, being too strong and powerful to take its place as just one of many members in the European family – as just one of many great states – Russia cannot take a place in history worthy of itself and of Slavdom unless it becomes the head of a unique, independent political system of countries and unless it serves as a balance to Europe in all its community and wholeness [*obshnosti i tselosti*].²⁹

Danilevskii's call in this passage continued the messianic chorus of many of the earlier Slavophiles, including Aleksei Khomiakov, who believed that, "History calls Russia to be at the forefront of universal enlightenment. It gives her this right because of the all-roundedness and fullness of her principles, and a right given by history to a people is a duty imposed on each of its members."³⁰

On the basis of Danilevskii's geography and ethno-cultural theory, a pan-Slavic ideology was gaining force which defined itself in direct opposition to all things European. Any broader identity that might bridge Danilevskii's cultural-historical types was excluded as an impossibility under the dynamics of his historical "law" because such a "shared human civilization" [*obshechelovecheskoi*] was a wholly unattainable, and undesirable ideal that could only (theoretically) happen "following the consecutive [*posledovatel'nim*] or simultaneous [*sovmestnim razvitiem*] development of all cultural-historical types, [whose] distinctive activity has appeared throughout the historical life of man in the past, present, and future."³¹

The development of a broad cultural-historical type that might blend Slavdom and Europe was impossible, but the time was ripe for Russia to fulfill her historical destiny and lead the Slavic

²⁹ *Rossiia i Evropa*, 402.

³⁰ Duncan, 23 (quotation from Khomiakov, "Po povodu Gumdol'dta", *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 2nd ed., I, 172-74.)

³¹ *Rossiia i Evropa*, 124.

world to its rightful place of prominence, “in a word, Moscow should be the capital not just of Russia, but of an entire Union of Slavdom.”³²

From Eurasia to Eurasianism

Danilevskii was able to build an argument for a unique Eurasian cultural-historical identity on top of his new geography on the basis that significant physical barriers had walled off the peoples of the Eurasian plain from most contact with outsiders, and that within this self-contained world there were no major land forms that had prevented communication amongst the various peoples inhabiting it. As a consequence the different groups living on this continental plain had developed similar social structures which revolved around the idea of collectivism (*sobornost'*) and communality, and not the dangerous poles of individualism competition which Danilevskii felt was inherent to European civilization. Out of this opposition Danilevskii called for Russia to take up its historically required mission and lead a union of Slavic peoples to the forefront of human civilization where the example of their unity and Orthodox holiness will save a failing world from self-immolation.

With the fall of Constantinople in 1453, there had arisen in Russia the idea that the sacred mantle of Christianity had passed from Greece to Moscow. Moscow was now the “Third Rome,” and it was subsequently the holy duty of the Tsars and the Russian people to protect the true principles of Christianity. Danilevskii saw in the creation of a Slavic Union the means to fulfill that destiny. In the realm of the spiritual and philosophical such a Union of Orthodox states representing the pure form of Christianity (*chistaia forma*) would act as a shield against the corrupting religious and philosophical tenets currently driving the revolutions in Europe.³³ (This was of course also a

³² *Op cit.*, 384.

³³ Rossiia, 180.

complete rejection of Chaadaev's initial call for a reunification of Creeds, which was theoretically impossible according to Danilevskii). Politically, such a Union would have the advantage of strengthening the Slavic states militarily and diplomatically against aggressive powers, which at the time meant principally against Catholic Poland and the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans.

This isolationist, messianic ideology had two core values: Orthodox righteousness, and the idea of a government of truth which acted directly out of this righteousness and in furtherance of the messianic aim. These two values – the *bytovoe ispovednichestvo* (the strict observance of the Faith), and the *ideaia pravitel'nitsa* (the idea of a government of truth) – placed Danilevskii's proto-Eurasianist conception squarely in line with earlier exponents of the Russian Idea. Under such a system, as Tim McDaniels shows in his *The Agony of the Russian Idea*, there is little room for an opposing, yet morally and politically loyal, view on a given issue. Any dissent from official policy is not understood to be a valid political argument, but rather a nearly heretical attack on the one, holy, Truth as embodied by the *ideaia pravitel'nitsa*.

But then came the First World War and the 1917 revolution, which ushered to power an avowedly atheistic state. To those sympathetic to Danilevskii's vision the revolution was a complete catastrophe because Orthodoxy had been set expunged from the sustaining ideology of the revolution. Under Leninist interpretation it would no longer form the central core of a distinct Slavic culture and history. As a result, to those following Danilevskii's thinking the revolution represented the gravest form of an alien European philosophy ever imposed on the Eurasian cultural space since the reforms of Peter I. In the words of one Russian émigré observer the chief error of Marxist-Leninist political philosophy was that it completely failed to understand the distinct nature of Russia and the Russians, paid no attention to the "national tasks" of the nation and proceeded to "rape it politically" in accordance with foreign European philosophies.³⁴

³⁴ Ivan Il'in, "Russkaia revoliutsiia byla katastrofiia," *Russkaia ideia*, ed. V.M. Piskunov (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1994) 2:228, quoted in Tim McDaniels, *The Agony of the Russian Idea*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) 10.

When by 1920 it became clear that the Bolsheviks could not be defeated by force, a group of thinkers took it upon themselves to create the framework out which the revolution might eventually be overcome spiritually. The core of this group was led once again by a geographer-economist, Petr N. Savitskii (1895-1968). Making their home in exile in Sofia, they began publishing a series of tracts that had as their starting point Danilevskii's Eurasian geography. Savitskii and the *Evrasiitsii* (Eurasianists – they were the first to call themselves as such) proceeded from a conception of history that considered the Moscovite State the direct successor not of the Kievan Rus, which was the generally accepted historical lineage, but of the Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan.³⁵ In making this claim, they more explicitly tied the peculiarities of Danilevskii's Eurasian geography to the historical development of a distinct Eurasian culture. They would use this idea of the geographical giving rise to the cultural, to create not just a new geography but to develop the proto-Eurasianist idea of Danilevskii into a wholly independent political philosophy called *Evrasiitsvo* (Eurasianism).³⁶

The émigré Eurasianists married Danilevskii's ideas to the emerging concept of geopolitics which had first been proposed by the geographers Rudolf Kjellen (1864 - 1922) and Friedrich Ratzel (1844 - 1904).³⁷ Like Danilevskii, Ratzel's original training was not in geography, but in zoology and biology. This pattern is important to understanding the origins of Eurasianist and geopolitical thought. Ratzel's thinking was heavily influenced by Darwinism, which was the basis of his first book.³⁸ But it also seems likely that Danilevskii's own conceptions of the geographical influence on

³⁵ The four "founders" included Savitskii, the linguist and ethnographer N.S. Trubetskoi, the philosopher and theologian G.V. Florovskii, and the art critic P.P. Suvchinskii. Their first publication was a collection called *Iskhod k Vostoku. Predchuvstviia i Sversheniia. Utverszhenie Evraziitsev*, 1921. (*Exodus to the East. Forebodings and Events. An Affirmation of the Eurasians*). For an exhaustive bibliography of Eurasianist writing see A. V. Antoshchenko, [bibliography on-line] available at <http://www.karelia.ru/psu/Chairs/PreRev/BIBLENG.RTF>.

³⁶ *Kul'turologiia XX Bek, Ensiklopediia*, (Sankt-Petrburg Universitetskaiia Kniga: 1998) [encyclopedia on-line] available at <http://www.yanko.lib.ru/books/cultur/encyclopcultXX/a.html> credits the first known use of the term to Trubetskoi in his *Evropa i Chelovechestvo* (1920) (*Europe and Humanity*).

³⁷ Kjellen is credited with coining the term, *geopolitik*, in Swedish, in Bertil Haggman, *Geopolitics, Classical and Modern: A Selected Bibliography and an Introduction*, (Helsingborg: 1988) 2nd edition 1996, [book on-line] available at <http://www.algonet.se/~jman/bertil/geobibl.html>

³⁸ Ratzel's first book, *Sein und Werden der organischen Welt* (1869), was about Darwin's concepts.

human cultural development and political development have a foundation in Darwinian concepts.³⁹ Whatever the direct influence, Danilevskii certainly grounded his arguments in the similarity of vegetation and land forms throughout the Eurasian plain before extending the concept to explain the development of a unique cultural-historical type. Later geographers like Ratzel further used Darwinian theory as a conceptual link to formulate the idea of geopolitics, which sought to explain the political development of societies as it related to their geography.

What Danilevskii had called the Eurasian plain, the Eurasianists (borrowing from geopolitical terminology) dubbed the *Kontinent-Okean* (Continental-Ocean) to show its symmetrical opposition to the dominant maritime environment as embodied in the European “salt-water doctrine”.⁴⁰ It was the basic geography of this broad expanse of land-ocean, unimpeded by high mountains or any other major geographical formation, which had allowed the Mongols to capture an empire stretching all the way across the southern tier of the Eurasian plain.

Indeed, according to this theory it was the experience of being under Mongol domination that had forged the earliest aspects of a cohesive Eurasian culture. The Eurasian peoples, particularly the Russians, had sought refuge under the wing of the Orthodox church during the Mongol conquest. Their cultural identity had been strengthened during this time in the sanctuary of monasteries and churches, where the idea of Russian Orthodox exceptionalism had given rise to the Muscovite State. The unification of the Russians was accomplished beneath the banner of this divinely inspired mission to overthrow the Mongols and had the effect of imprinting upon Eurasian culture the necessity of a strong centralized state acting on behalf of a holy people in order to protect “true” Christianity from both physical and metaphysical assault.

With the addition of geopolitical theory to Danilevskii’s original formulation, however, the Eurasianists of the early twentieth century moved away from the conception of a Eurasian culture

³⁹ Unfortunately, the author is not aware of any research into the extent to which Danilevskii was directly aware of and influenced by Darwin’s writing.

⁴⁰ Petr Savitskii, *Kontinent Evraziia*, (Moscow: Agraf, 1997), 398.

centered around just the Orthodox Slavs. Nikolai Trubetskoi (1890-1938), accepted the idea that “The Russians, the Ugro-Finns, and the Volga Turks comprise a cultural zone that has connections with both the Slavs and the ‘Turanian East,’ and it is difficult to say which of these is more important.” He stressed that, “Turkic blood mingles in Russian veins with that of the Ugro-Finns and the Slavs. . . .[I]t is usually forgotten that our ‘brothers’ (if not in language or faith, then in blood, character, and culture) are not only the Slavs but the Turanians”⁴¹

The Soviet State, too, was viewed in much the same way as the Mongol yoke. Despite its roots in ‘alien’ European philosophy, the Soviet experiment nevertheless confirmed the essential cohesiveness of the Eurasian peoples as a single culture expressed politically through the Soviet state. What was important was that the historical development of the newly “Soviet” peoples had been profoundly different from the individualistic capitalist European society situated just outside the Eurasian plain.

Echoing Danilevskii, Trebetskoi argued in his 1920 *Evropa i Chelovechestvo* (Europe and Mankind) that not only was Russia’s flirtation with European social and philosophical forms a mistake, but any attempt to implement those forms in society would inevitably fail because such integration was impossible. The “chauvinistic cosmopolitanism” of European society was unique to “the history of a specific ethnic group” (this phrasing probably also has direct anti-Semitic connotations) and could not be taken in by Eurasian culture because it was opposed to the “national psychology” of Eurasians. Even if some parts of the intelligentsia tried to incorporate European philosophy into Eurasian society they would nevertheless fail because some aspect of their natural (Eurasian) traits would persist. European society would never accept even just this tiny “Europeanized” strata because they would eventually recognize the remaining Eurasian psychology,

⁴¹ N.S. Trubetskoi, “The Upper and Lower Stories of Russian Culture,” in his *The Legacy of Ghengis Khan and Other Essays on Russia’s Identity* (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publication, 1991), 81-99, quoted in Mark Bassin, “Classical Eurasianism and the Geopolitics of Russian Identity” [paper on-line], (Presented online as part of the Collaborative Research Network project on “Situating Russia”, 2 March 2001, accessed 1 May 2002), available at http://www.dartmouth.edu/~crn/russia_papers.htm.

and continue to reject them as being backward. The result for Eurasian society would then be a split between the “Europeanized” elites and the people.

Unlike Danilevskii, who ascribed to Europe intentionally hostile motives toward Eurasian culture, Trubetskoi insists that his is a structural analysis where the intentions of European society play no role in the theoretical outcome of the civilizational clash. But like Danilevskii, Trubetskoi sees the attempts at integration being made by parts of the intelligentsia as futile, because the theoretical requirements for a shared civilization – the *simultaneous* development of all cultures throughout time – is not possible. Trubetskoi goes on to repeat Danilevskii’s description of Europe as being intrinsically militaristic and capitalistic, but contends that this requires that non-European Eurasian society adopt the technology of “western” warfare and organization in order to defend itself *from* that same technology and warfare. As a theory of historical development, Trubetskoi contends that this cycle results in a series of frantic sprints to catch up (*prishka nagnat’*) with the “West”, followed by periods of stagnation and depreciation in Eurasia’s technological level vis a vis Europe. Trubetskoi extends this theory backwards into history, arguing that Peter the Great only wanted to emulate Europe in order to steal its technology and then turn away from it once it was strategically safe to do so. In the end the only solution, writes Trubetskoi, is if the “Slavs, Chinese, Indians, Arabs, Negroes, and other tribes’ constituting humanity, not the humanity about which the Romano-Germans love to talk, but the real humanity” fight the Europeans. This clash of “Romano-German” civilization against the rest of the world is the only true conflict of world history.⁴²

Another group of thinkers who expounded views similar to this but who remained separate from the *evraziistii*, were the *smenovekhovtsii* (they drew their name from one of the journals they frequently published in, *Smena vekh*, meaning “change of landmarks.”) Under the leadership of Nikolai Vasil’evich Ustrialov (1891-1937), they sought to support Russian imperial expansion through a variation on geopolitical theory. Already a year before the 1917 revolution Ustrialov

⁴² N.S. Trubetskoi, “The Upper and Lower Stories”, 114.

wrote, "The foreign policy of Russia must be a policy of imperialism. Imperialism is the legitimate way of all great states. Russia must behave aggressively."⁴³ The reasoning was straight-forward as Ustrialov explained after 1917:

Only a 'physically' powerful state can possess a great culture. The natures of 'small powers' have the possibility to be elegant, honorable, even 'heroic', but they are organically incapable of being great. This requires a grand style, a grand sweep, a grand scale of thought and action – 'the brush of a Michelangelo'. A German, a Russian, an English 'messianism' is possible. But, let us say, a Serb, Rumanian or Portuguese messianism grates on the ear like a false note.⁴⁴

Despite such differences in emphasis, the early formal adherents to Eurasianism developed the concept into a formal political philosophy that, while not wholly uniform, nevertheless did contain elements that were broadly agreed on. As an organizing political doctrine Eurasianism promotes a government whose legitimacy rests on the idea that the nations (people) residing in the area defined as Eurasia have a spiritually and historically inspired mission to reveal to the world a new truth. This purpose was set out in the introduction to the first Eurasianist compilation, *Iskod k Vostoku* (Exodus to the East), "With trembling joy, with shivering apprehension lest we give ourselves over to devastating arrogance, we sense, along with Herzen, that nowadays 'history is pushing precisely into our gate.' It is pushing not in order to generate some zoological "self-identification" for us, but so that through the great exploit of labor and accomplishment Russia would reveal to the world some universal truth, as the great peoples of the past and present had revealed it."⁴⁵ This revelation to mankind was in absolute opposition to the "Romano-Germanic" "world of systems" that had just pushed the world into war in an attempt to make its system of systems the "immutable norm". To the Eurasianists this was the present and past, but not the future.

⁴³ Iver B. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe. A Study in Identity and International Relations*, (London: Routledge, 1996), 111.

⁴⁴ Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe*, 111.

⁴⁵ Petr Savitskii, P. Suvchinskii, Prince N.S. Trubetskoi, and Geogri Florovski, *Exodus to the East. Forebodings and Events. Exodus. An Affirmation of the Eurasians*, trans. and ed. Ilya Vinkovetsky, (Idyllwild, California: Charles Slacks, Jr., 1996), 1-2.

The future was a time when Russia would lead the world away from the destruction of European competitive politics, colonial market economies, and spiritually dead culture, toward a Platonic ideal of *sobornost'* and *ideaia pravitel'nitsa*. In the aftermath of WWI, the 1917 revolution, and years of bloody civil war, the Eurasianist idea offered the comfort that the sacrifices of those years could still, someday, produce something sacred.

National Eurasianism

It was sentiments like these, drawing heavily from the deterministic tone of social Darwinism and religious messianism, that helped to revive the Eurasian idea in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. If Savitskii, Trubetskoi, and the other founders of classical Eurasianism were reacting in part to the devastation of WWI and the collapse of the Romanov dynasty, then the neo-Eurasianists of the late twentieth century are reacting to the aftermath of the Cold War and the construction of a new world order which they perceive as yet another morally bankrupt and geopolitically dangerous American/European hegemony being forced upon the Eurasian world.

The roots of this reformulation reach back to the development of geopolitical theory, the geography of Danilveskii, the economics of Marx and Savitskii, and down to the cultural/spiritual critiques of the Slavophiles. The contemporary *Dvisheniia "Evraziia"* (Eurasian Movement) – and the newly organized political party "*Evraziia*" – under its leader Aleksandr Dugin reconstruct classical Eurasianism for a post-Cold War environment primarily by strengthening its emphasis on geopolitical theory. Dugin uses Halford Mackinder's theory of heartland and rimland to draw the boundaries for a clash of civilizations between "Atlanticist" sea-powers and the Eurasian heartland. (Figure 2).

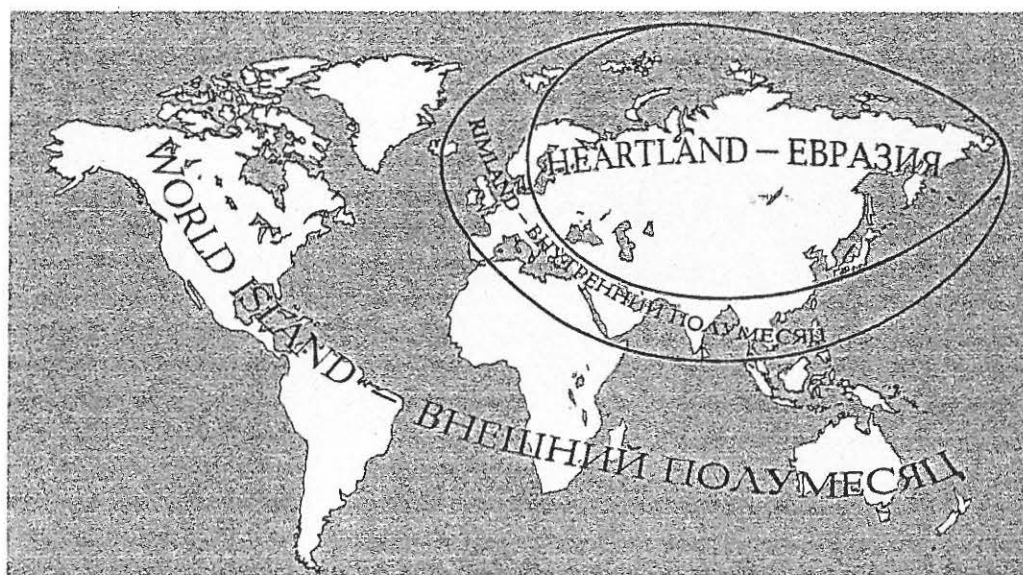


Figure 2: Representation of Mackinder's geopolitical theory of rimland and heartland. (Source: *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1999, 11.)

As Savitskii argued in *Kontinent-Okean* the economics of sea transport are far cheaper than land transport. Consequently, the development of international trade and international monetary markets – *globalisatsiia* (globalization) – is to the great benefit of countries occupying Mackinder's rimland, and detrimental to the heartland areas like the Eurasian plain. Dugin distills this into a simple statement expressed mathematically:

Fate of Labour = Fate of Land, East.
 Fate of Capital = Fate of Sea, West.
 Labour = Land (East) = Russian (Soviet, Eurasian) nation.
 Capital = Sea (West) = Roman-German (Anglo-Saxon, American) nation.⁴⁶

Following the logic of this geopolitical and economic formulation, Dugin's "platform" calls for the creation of a "*Evraziiskii Soiuz*" (Eurasian Union) in the image of the European Union, but designed to counter the hegemonic influence of European and American globalization.

⁴⁶ The newly founded party will hold its first convention on May 30, 2002, [press-release on-line] available at <http://eurasia.com.ru/30-05.html>; Internet.

Militarily Dugin supports the reintegration of the Commonwealth of Independent States as well as other “Eurasian” states into a Eurasian empire whose might corrects the loss of great-power status suffered by the Soviet Union after 1991. Indeed his best known work, *Osnovy geopolitiki* (*The Foundations of Geopolitics*) is about why the creation of this Eurasian empire should be an imperative aim of Russian (Eurasian) foreign and domestic policy, and how it can be accomplished.⁴⁷

With the transformation of his “movement” into a political party, Eurasianist ideology is moving to the center of Russian politics. According to a 2001 opinion poll, some seventy-one percent of Russians characterize Russia as being a “*evroaziatskoi*” (euroasiatic) or “*pravoslavnoi*” (Orthodox) civilization as opposed to a “western” one.⁴⁸ This is fertile ground for a politics based on Eurasianism. In military circles it appears that Dugin’s *Osnovy* has had just as strong an effect. Retired General Makhmut A. Gareyev, former Deputy Chief of Staff put it bluntly:

One of these unifying factors is the idea of Russia’s rebirth as a great power, not a regional power (it is situated in several large regions of Eurasia) but a truly great power on a global scale. This is determined not by someone’s desire, not just by possession of nuclear weapons or by size of territory, but by the historical traditions and objective needs in the development of the Russian society and state. Either Russia will be a strong, independent, and unified power, uniting all peoples, republics, krais, and oblasts in the Eurasian territory, which is in the interests of all humanity, or it will fall apart, generating numerous conflicts, and then the entire international community will be unable to manage the situation on a continent with such an abundance of weapons of mass destruction. In the opinion of the president of the AVN (i.e., Gareyev himself—author), there is no other alternative.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Aleksandr Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki: Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii*, [book on-line] (Moscow: Arktogaia, 2000, accessed 4 March 2002) available at <http://www.arctogaia.com/public/osnovygeo/>; Internet.

⁴⁸ All-Russia Center for Public Opinion Research (VITSIOM), “Survey Results on Russian Attitudes,” 13 November, 2001, [survey on-line] available at http://www.wciom.ru/vciom/new/press/press121115_32.htm.

⁴⁹ Stephen J. Blank, “Threats to Russian Security: The View from Moscow,” (report, Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PN, July 2000) 34.

Clearly Eurasianism as a political philosophy carried forward by Dugin is firmly anchored in the same idea of a historically necessitated empire according to the tenets of geopolitics and historical determinism as espoused by Ustrialov and others.

It is at this point in the development of his variant of Eurasianism that Dugin's well documented association with fascism comes into play. Referring back to Trubetskoi, Dugin envisions the creation of an "*obsheevraziiskom natsionalnizme*" (all-Eurasian nationalism) based on their shared geopolitical history and their spiritual unity.⁵⁰ The confessional unity among Eurasian nations is found in their shared idea of *sobornost'* and *ideaia pravitel'nitsa*. To Dugin, Orthodox and Islamic societies both share an affinity for demotic, non-democratic forms of government that express their shared faith in the idea of a government of truth, even if they differ in the religious details of that truth. This is in direct contrast to western, "Catholic" Christianity:

One of the poles - Capital - West - Sea - Anglo-Saxons' - is traced, as we saw, to [sic] Western Roman Empire, the source and starting point of all those tendencies, which have gradually crystallized in that pole.

The Western Roman Empire in the religious sense is associated with Vatican, the catholic version of Christianity. Consequently, it is quite logic [sic] to appeal to Catholicism as a religious matrix of that pole.

The opposite "Eurasian" pole is directly associated with "Byzantism" [sic] and Orthodox Christianity, for Russians are both the orthodox Christian nation and the authors of the first socialist revolution, they are also those, whose dwelling is the continental Heartland, which, according to Macinder, [sic] is the axis category of all forces of Land. To the same extend, [sic] to which the modern liberal West is secularized, generalized, modernized and universalized result of Catholicism, the Soviet model represents the utmost - also secularized, generalized and modernized - development of Orthodox Christian Empire.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Press release of the Political Party "Evraziia," [press-release on-line] (Moscow: Political Party "Eurasia," accessed 2 May 2002); available at <http://eurasia.com.ru/30-05.html>; Internet.

⁵¹ Aleksandr Dughin (sic), "The Paradigm of the End," [text on-line] (Moscow: Arctogaia, accessed 10 April 2002) available at <http://arctogaia.com/public/eng-parad.htm#5>; Internet.

The result of this division is an inevitable clash of civilizations along religious and geopolitical lines – Dugin refers to the “West” as the “Atlanticist” powers, which is a reference to to the colonial “salt-water” doctrine which he sees perpetuated in modern form in NATO – necessitating the creation of a Eurasian empire in order to strengthen and protect Orthodox culture not only from an encroaching Western, “catholic”, secularized, global order, but also to repair the damage done by the imposition of Soviet Communism.

Like the earlier Eurasianists, Dugin looks at the 1917 revolution as a terrible misapplication of Marxism, arguing that while the revolution proved the ability of the proletariat to overthrow the exploitive Capitalist class, it was a “spatial and temporal mistake” because it did not occur where and when Marx had predicted it would, and because, “It came true only in combination with other factors, and, more specifically speaking, where Marx’s political and economic doctrine was combined with cultural and religious tendencies which were quite dissimilar with cultural and historical discourse (suggestions) of “Capital” [sic] author himself.” Communism’s error was that it failed to recognize the nature of a “politically independent orthodox Christian state, in which the temporal power (Basileus) and the spiritual power (patriarch) are in strictly defined correlation, determined by the principle of the Symphony. Consequently, the deviation from that symphonic Byzantine paradigm means, “apostacy”, defection.”⁵²

Finally, “Capitalism is changing its symbol,” writes Aleksandr Dugin in reference to Marx’s use of the mole as a symbol for Capitalism:

The classical mole has exhausted its opportunities. His dirty holes have pitted the unfortunate ground so that reality has become a universal sieve, from which the inhabitants of that side of the great wall make faces. The Era of the Mole has ended. Capitalism, as Gilles Deleuze [sic] asserts, is entering a new phase; the phase of the serpent. In the modern globalist world the distinction between dominating and dominated, between men and women, full and hungry, doctors and patients, teachers and scholars is erasing itself. An open society is constructed in accordance with the serpent principle. Everything merges into everything else, the continuous social surfing penetrates the strata of global society. Capitalism no longer bribes Labour,

⁵² Dughin (sic), “The Paradigm of the End.”

but creates Labour in the form of entertainment. The cloning of people only became possible because Capitalism managed to clone Labour. Now it is clear why in a private office of the largest banking oligarchy a fat, unblinking terrarium can be located. Behind closed doors the animal and its owner look at each other with cold eyes and motionless, heavy eyelids. The Master of the Society of the Spectacle, a hypnotist for the hoaxed, paralysed [sic] Eurasian crowds that are the last to lie down by the luminescent escalator and fall into the globalist hell of the End of History.⁵³

From among the hundreds of pages of Dugin's writings, this excerpt perhaps more than all the others, gives a sense of the full range of what his resurrected and reconstituted Eurasianism means. Western civilization is a serpent, cunning and deceptive with its rationality, hypnotic with the glitter of its wealth, dangerous with its bite, and evil with its negation of the divine mysterium separating man and heaven. It holds out the temptation of god-like power and knowledge, only to deliver Hell instead.

Modern Western political structures rest on the idea that, at least in the realm of politics, truth is a mediated commodity arrived at [produced] through a process of compromise, and not a revelation that must be defended from hordes of attacking heretics and thrust upon masses of wandering innocents for the good of their own [and the world's] salvation. If the very language of capitalism infuses the metaphors of the West's political discourse, i.e. truth as a *commodity* that is *produced by processing* in a *system* of compromise, then the language of messianism spoken by Dugin must necessarily clothe itself in the vestments of war, i.e. *irreconcilliable* differences that must first be *defeated* so that the Truth can then be *imposed* and *expanded* on. As an indication of the unease which Eurasianist ideas are received by non-ethnically Russian, non-Orthodox segments

⁵³ Aleksandr Dugin, "We are Going to Cure You with Poison, An Essay on the Serpent," [text on-line] (Moscow: Arctogaia, accessed 10 April 2002); available at <http://arctogaia.com/public/eng/serpent.html>; Internet.

Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995), French philosopher of post-modernism, he was close to Michel Foucault who said that the 20th century may someday "be known as Deleuzian".

of the Russian population, a Tartar writer acerbically notes, "Eurasianism in the present-day treatment is an ideological cloak for the old, tried and true policy of territorial claims."⁵⁴

Beneath that cloak is hidden Dugin's darkly imperialist motto "Geography is our Fate" (*Geografiia nasha sud'ba*), but also the vision of a pre-modern, pre-imperialist world. It is a world still innocent of the mass infernos and rapes of the twentieth century, a world not lost in the mirrored labyrinth of its own thought. It is world of fantasy and nostalgia, built upon the foundation of a dangerously energetic messianism, and deterministic historiography. Placed in the context of a collapsed society, this vision of Eurasia holds the possibility of becoming a justification for the slaughter and oppression it was meant to stand against.

⁵⁴ Raphael Khakimov, *Russia and Tartarstan. At a Crossroads of History*, [paper on-line] (Kazan, Russia: Kazan State University, accessed 2 May 2002); available at www.federalmcart.ksu.ru/publications/khakimov3.htm; Internet.

It should be noted that Tartarstan is a part of the Russian Federation. Such a sentiment, coming from a Russian citizen, indicates the unease with which Eurasianist ideas are received by non-ethnic, non-Orthodox segments of the population.

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